

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 CU-02 /075 W
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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2640
USIA WASHDC
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION NATO
AMCONSUL MUNICH
USUN NEW YORK 555
USMISSION BERLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PRAGUE 1219

USIA FOR IEU

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUUM, PINT, CZ
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SUBJECT: REUTERS CORRESPONDENT'S FAREWELL PARTY IS GATHERING
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS

1. SUMMARY: SOME 20 CZECHOSLOVAK HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS AND
CHARTER 77 SIGNERS GATHER. THE MOOD IS A RESIGNED ONE, THE
PARTICIPANTS WEARY. THEY TELL OF THEIR STRUGGLE WITH POLICE.
END SUMMARY.

2. DEPARTING REUTERS CORRESPONDENT PIERRE REQUETTE, ONE OF THE MOST ACTIVE WESTERN JOURNALISTS TO COVER THE CZECHOSLOVAK HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN, GAVE A FAREWELL PARTY MAY 10 BEFORE TAKING UP NEW ASSIGNMENT

IN ALGIERS. TWO-TIERED AFFAIR AT REUTER'S OFFICE INCLUDED DIPLOMATIC

CORPS IN EARLY EVENING, AND HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST LATER. FRENCH AND AUSTRIAN AMBASSADORS, PAO AND POLITICAL OFFICER ATTENDED BOTH, AS DID CANADIAN AND DUTCH DCM'S AND SEVERAL OTHER DIPLOMATS.

3. ITALIAN DCM SAID MFA HAS NOT DISCUSSED WITH HIM RECENT EXPLOITS OF ITALIAN JOURNALIST-PHOTOGRAPHER-ADVENTURER WHO, POSING AS A MAITRE D'HOTEL VISITING BRATISLAVA AS A TOURIST, BRIBED SLOVAK POLICE TO LET HIM INTERVIEW DUBCEK AT HOME. MANY PICTURES WERE SHOT, BUT AS WRITER WAS NOT POLITICAL JOURNALIST, IT WILL BE ESSENTIALLY A SUNDAY SUPPLEMENT PICTURE STORY ON "ALEXANDER DUBCEK AT HOME" FOR SUNDAY CORRIDOR, A ROME WEEKLY, ITALIAN DIPLOMAT SAID. JOURNALIST REPORTEDLY SAID DUBCEK LOOKED PALE AND TIRED.

4. ONLY PERSON FROM OFFICIAL CZECH PRESS WORLD TO ATTEND EARLY EVENING GATHERING WAS THIRD-LEVEL MFA PRESS SECTION FIGURE. PAO ASKED HIM ABOUT RECENT INCIDENT WITH CANADIAN JOURNALIST WHO HAD AGREED TO ABIDE BY NEW MFA PRESS POLICY NOT TO INTERVIEW DISSIDENTS AS PRECONDITION OF OBTAINING VISA. JOURNALIST STILL HAD ALL HIS PAPERS CONFISCATED. AIRPORT POLICE SEIZED SEVERAL MFA PRESS HANDOUTS AND NOTES OF CONVERSATION WITH STANISLAV NOVOTNY, 6TH DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL NOT USUALLY CONSIDERED CONFIDENTIAL

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A HOT SOURCE BY THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS. MFA FUNCTIONARY SAID HE PERSONALLY HAD JUST RETURNED ALL THE JOURNALISTS' PAPERS TO THE CANADIAN EMBASSY AND MUMBLED SOMETHING LIKE, "THIS SORT OF THING WILL HAPPEN."

5. REQUETTE TOLD PAO, "THERE IS NOTHING HAPPENING WITH THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT HERE NOW. I HAVENT FILED A STORY ON IT IN WEEKS, AND PROBABLY WON'T BEFORE I LEAVE"

6. WIFE OF IMPRISONED WRITER VACLAV HAVEL SAID HUSBAND HAS NOW OBTAINED A LAWYER, BUT NO ONE KNOWS WHEN PLAYWRIGHT'S TRIAL BEGINS. "IT WILL BE A POLITICAL, NOT A JUDICIAL DECISION," SHE ADDED, NOTING SHE WAS ALLOWED ONLY ONE THIRTY-MINUTE MEETING WITH HUSBAND SINCE HIS JANUARY ARREST. SHE IS PERMITTED TO SEND HIM THREE KILOGRAMS OF FOOD, VITAMINS, AND PERSONAL EFFECTS A MONTH. NOTED HUSBAND EXERCISES REGULARLY, PLAYS CHESS WITH ANOTHER PRISONER, AND IS ALLOWED ONE BOOK A WEEK FROM PRISON LIBRARY, WHICH CONTAINS MOSTLY VOLUMES TWO OF BALZAC, THREE OF TOLSTOY, ETC. SAID HAVEL IS IN GOOD HEALTH DESPITE ORDEAL.

7. A NON-CHARTER SIGNER, BUT FRIEND OF HAVELS, SAID ARRESTED WRITER HAS BEEN TALKING AT GREAT LENGTH TO POLICE. NOTED THAT POLICE, IN EIGHT HOUR INTERROGATION, FACED HER WITH 35 PAGES OF ALLEGED TESTIMONY BY HAVEL, EACH PAGE INDIVIDUALLY SIGNED. THAT NUMEROUS OTHER FRIENDS AND CONTACTS OF HIS HAVE BEEN CALLED TO POLICE HEADQUARTERS FOR SIMILAR QUESTIONING INDICATES HAVEL MAY INDEED BE COOPERATING WITH POLICE. HE REPORTEDLY GAVE POLICE THE NAMES OF SEVERAL OF THE HOUSEWIVES WHO TYPE SAMIZDAT MANUSCRIPTS AS WELL. INTERROGATION TECHNIQUE WAS TO ALTERNATE MATTER OF FACT INFORMATION GATHERING SESSIONS WITH TWO POLICE OFFICIALS AT PRISON, AND INTERPRETIVE SESSIONS AT ANOTHER LOCATION WITH A MAJ. SVOBODA WHOSE MANNER WAS MORE ACCOMODATING AND SOLICITIOUS, WHILE WORKING TO BUILD UP THE DATA BASE.

8. PAVEL KOHOUT AND WIFE LOOKED FATIGUED. KOHOUT, WHOSE PLAY "POOR MURDERER," APPEARED ON BROADWAY LAST YEAR, CONFIDENTIAL

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DISCLOSED HE HAS NOT WRITTEN IN RECENT MONTHS, HIS ENTIRE ENERGIES GOING TOWARD AVOIDING EXPULSION FROM HIS ATTRACTIVE HRADCANY APARTMENT. SAID HE LOST AND POLICE WERE EXPECTED 9:00 A.M. FOLLOWING MORNING, MAY 11, TO FORCIBLY EVICT COUPLE TO HIS DISTANT COUNTRY CHATA.

9. PAVEL LANDAWSKY, BANNED ACTOR, WAS PRESENT. LANDAWSKY HELPED TAKE ORIGINAL CHARTER 77 TO PRESIDENT'S OFFICE, BUT DELIEVERD IT AND SIGNER'S ADDRESSES TO POLICE INSTEAD WHEN HIS CAR WAS STOPPED FOR ROUTINE TRAFFIC VOLATIONS AND AN ARGUMENT ENSUED. ACTOR, ONCE ONE OF COUNTRY'S TOP COMEDIANS, SAID HE HAS NOT BEEN INTERROGATED BY POLICE FOR OVER A MONTH, BUT THAT HIS WIFE WAS "INVITED" TO POLICE HEADQUARTERS MAY 16. NOTED HE HAS FREQUENTLY WRITTEN MILOS FORMAN, FRIEND OF LONG-STANDING, BUT HE HAS RECEIVED NO MAIL FROM OVERSEAS SINCE SIGNING CHARTER.

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SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 CU-02 /075 W

-----120706Z 045123 /11

R 111415Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2641

USIA WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

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10. JIRI KOLAR, INTERNATIONALLY KNOWN ARTIST-WRITER, AND ONLY PROMINENT CZECH ARTIST TO SIGN CHARTER 77, SAID LIFE FOR HIM BEFORE AND AFTER CHARTER SIGNING WAS EXACTLY THE SAME. KOLAR, 70, HAD HIS DRIVERS PERMIT CONFISCATED BY THE POLICE, WHO CONFIDENTIAL

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TOOK HIS WIFE'S AS WELL. HE HAS NOT BEEN ALLOWED TO EXHIBIT IN PRAGUE SINCE 1962. HE HAD A ONE-MAN SHOW AT THE GUGGENHEIM IN NEW YORK IN 1975 AND DISCOURSED AT LENGTH ABOUT THE CITY AND ITS ARTISTS TO A SMALL CLUSTER OF PEOPLE GATHERED AROUND HIM.

11. SEVERAL PARTICIPANTS SAID ZDENEK MLYNAR, ONE OF CHARTER'S LEADERS, AND HIGH PARTY OFFICIAL IN '68 WILL LEAVE FOR EXILE IN AUSTRIA SOON. DEPARTURE ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED, BUT MLYNAR ALLEGEDLY WANTS TO WAIT UNTIL RIGHTIST SUDENTEN-GERMAN GATHERING IN VIENNA, AT WHITSUN, IS OVER BEFORE GOING THERE, REPORTEDLY WITH SEVERAL LESS WELL KNOWN CHARTER SIGNERS. AUSTRIAN DCM TELLS US 28 CHARTER SINGERS HAVE INQUIRED ABOUT EMIGRATION TO AUSTRIA BUT ONLY ONE--IVAN BINAR, A TEACHER-- HAS OBTAINED ALL REQUIRED GOC DOCUMENTATION AND AN AUSTRIAN

VISA. BINAR HAS NOT YET DEPARTED CZECHOSLOVAKIA HOWEVER.

12. SON OF JAN PATOCKA, THE DECEASED CHARTER SPOKESMAN, WAS PRESENT, SAID LITTLE.

13. TWO OF THE CZECH HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS SAID THEY FOUND PRESIDENT CARTER'S OUTSPOKENNESS ON THIS QUESTION VALUABLE IN THEIR OWN EFFORTS TO KEEP THIS ISSUE ALIVE.

14. COMMENT: THE BALL IS IN THE GOC'S COURT. THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS ARE TIRED, WORN DOWN BY THE CONSTANT EFFORTS OF A TOTALITARIAN REGIME ACTIVELY PURSUING THEM. EDITIRIALS IN RUDE PRAVO DONT HURT AS MUCH AS LOSING YOUR DRIVERS LICENSE DOES. THE INTERROGATIONS, DIVIDE-AND-CONQUER TACTICS, THREATS OF IMPRISONMENT, LOSS OF JOBS, OR OF DETRIMENTAL EFFECTS ON THE HEALTH, WELFARE, EDUCATIONAL OR EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS ALL HAVE WORN DOWN THE MEMBERS OF A MOVEMENT THAT WAS NEVER WELL ORGANIZED TO BEGIN WITH.

15. IN THE SAME PERIOD AS THE BATTLE-WEARY, SCATTERED CHARTER ADVOCATES GATHERED IN TWO ROOMS OF THE REUTER'S CORRESPONDENT'S CONFIDENTIAL

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APARTMENT, CENTRAL COMMITTEE SECRETARY JAN FOJTIK DELIVERED THE LATEST BLAST AGAINST THEM--AS WELL AS A STRIDENT ATTACK ON US HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES-- TO A SMETANA HALL AUDIENCE LED BY PRESIDENT HUSAK, PRESIDUM MEMBERS, AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE WARSAW PACT SUPREME COMMAND AND CENTRAL SOVIET ARMY GROUP.

16. NONE OF THE CHARTER SIGNERS HAS APPEARED TO CHANGE HIS POSITION, AND THERE NO DOUBT WILL BE A CONTINUATION OF SAMIZDAT LITERATURE AND POSSIBLY SOME SORT OF MORE PUBLIC CALLING ATTENTION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE TO THE CZECHOSLOVAK PUBLIC'S ATTENTION EBEFORE THE BELGRADE CSCE FOLLOW-UP CONFERENCE. THE ATMOSPEHRE, HOWEVER, OF THIS GATHERING, WAS DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT FROM AN EARLIER ONE, HELD LAST NOVEMBER WITH MANY OF THE SAME PARTICIPANTS AT THE AFP CORRESPONDENT'S APARTMENT (76 PRAGUE 3211). AT THAT TIME, THE MOOD WAS EBULLIENT, THE SATIRE HAD BITE, AND A "WE ARE GOING TO SHOW THEM SOMETHING" AIR PERVADED. THE MAY 10 PARTY WAS A MORE SUBDUED AFFAIR. THE PARTICIPANTS HAD SHARED A COMMON EXPERIENCE, BUT IT HAD NOT TURNED OUT AS THEY HAD HOPED.

17. STILL, THIS FAIRLY SMALL AND ALWAYS FRAGILE MOVEMENT HAS SUCCEEDED, WITH COUNTERPARTS IN THE SOVIET UNION AND ELSEWHERE IN EASTERN EUROPE, IN HELPING MAKE HUMAN RIGHTS AN ISSUE OF PRIME SIGNIFICANCE IN COMMUNIST EUROPE, IN THE NON-COMMUNIST WEST, AND IN THE EUROCOMMUNIST MOVEMENT. THESE EXTERNAL REPERCUSSIONS OF CHARTER 77 HAVE REPRESENTED

THE LOCAL HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS' GREATEST SUCCESS. BUT
EVEN ON THE INTERNAL SCENE, THE LOCAL MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT HAS
CONCENTRATED ON HUMAN RIGHTS-CHARTER 77 AS THE DOMINANT POLITICAL
QUESTION OF THE LAST FIVE MONTHS, AND THE DISSIDENTS CAN TAKE
SOME MEASURE OF SATISFACTION FROM HAVING AT LEAST CREATED A
DISCUSSION-DIALOGUE WITH THE REGIME ON THE
SUBJECT OF FREEDOM.
BYRNE

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Message Attributes

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